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The Top of the Poppers sing and play punk

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By the mid-1970s, the music industry had a long history of accommodating and recuperating teenage rebellion, and punk's defiant message of radical change also offered new opportunities for commercial enterprise. A rush to sign new bands who could be (broadly) associated with punk, and the concomitant shift toward 'new wave' styles, led to a degree of UK chart success for a number of groups. The inclusion of punk and new wave songs on a series of low-budget compilations featuring cover versions of contemporary hits strikes a particularly discordant tone with punk's self-styled image of a break with traditional music industry conventions. The albums released on the longstanding budget compilation series Top of the Pops between mid-1977 and early 1982 tell an interesting story about the cultural recuperation of punk, new wave and post-punk, and ask questions, perhaps, about the legitimacy of punk's often mythologised 'outsider status'. From their saccharine cover images, harking back to the pin-ups of the 1950s, to the awkwardly dated language of sleeve notes and the notion that the diversity of contemporary 'pop' is not tarnished by subcultural differences, these albums reflect a fascinating period in punk's acceptance, maturity and, perhaps, reluctant commodification.

Keywords

Top of the Pops, new wave, pop, cover version, recuperation, authenticity

The early punk movement positioned itself as an attempt to break away from music industry convention – a nihilistic, anarchistic and rebellious new start, more relevant to a disenfranchised youth who felt alienated by the overblown rock dinosaurs of the early 1970s. This narrative has dominated the popular imagination for more than four decades, perpetuated by punk musicians, fans, journalists and promoters: it should come as no surprise that a model of authenticity and radical insurgency would be embraced by self-styled rebels whose own sense of identity draws upon the same rhetoric.

Despite numerous critical voices charting histories to the contrary (Dale 2016, Worley 2017), punk's 'Year Zero' rhetoric still holds sway in the mainstream media: it does at least make for a good story and allows writers of a certain age the luxury of nostalgia. An accompanying narrative of teenage rebellion, independence and authenticity fits the punk myth like a leather glove, and many who benefit by association wouldn't want to disrupt it for fear of losing status, authority or cultural capital. However, in practice, there are obviously many antecedents and parallels to what might be termed 'punk', and the subculture's presumed radicalism – aesthetic, political or cultural – can be evaluated against other, perhaps more 'mainstream' rock and pop genres in order to gauge similarity or difference. To an extent, this has been done in relation to music (Dale 2012, 2016), countercultural history (Worley 2017, Binns 2019), cultural studies (Sabin 1999), fashion (Weiner 2018) and art and design (Bestley & Ogg 2012, Bestley & Burgess 2018).

...there are no absolute and pure beginnings in popular music. [...] ragtime, music hall and rock'n'roll did not come from nowhere and... it is folly to attempt to pick some genuine origin – the 1790s, say – for this area of music. Even in the more musically novel examples of punk such as the Slits, therefore, we find a wide variety of elements (instrumentation, song structure, four-in-the-bar metres and so forth) which have been unmistakably passed down from rock and pop more generally. (Dale 2016: 71)

The connection between punk and mainstream music industry practices relating to promotion, marketing and branding has seldom been analysed. This article sets out to explore one small, though fascinating, aspect of this relationship – the inclusion of punk and punk-related songs on the budget-priced *Top of the Pops* compilation album series sold in large high street retailers from the late 1960s onward.

Top of the Pops – BBC television’s flagship weekly pop music programme¹ – presented successful punk groups with something of a dilemma. The Clash publicly refused to appear on the show, while the Sex Pistols featured in a promotional film for their third single, ‘Pretty Vacant’, in July 1977 rather than in live – or mimed – performance.² Attitudes toward the programme had softened somewhat since the previous year. Interviewed by Janet Street-Porter for London Weekend Television in November 1976, Sex Pistols singer Johnny Rotten (John Lydon) had been scathing about the relevance of *Top of the Pops* to young audiences;

Janet Street-Porter: “You’re just attacking *Top of the Pops* and the sort of bands that are on there. Do think they are relevant to the kids of sixteen or seventeen?”

Johnny Rotten: “Of course they’re not. Relevant to their mums and dads, but that’s about all.”³
(*Punk Rock*, 1976).

Other early UK punk and new wave groups did appear on the programme, though the greater impact of the scene on the charts was not felt until 1978-79. The first directly punk-related appearance was by the Jam, on 19th May 1977, with their debut single ‘In The City’ – although some proto-punk groups such as Eddie & the Hot Rods had made appearances the previous Autumn. The Stranglers appeared a week later, performing ‘Go Buddy Go’, and both groups made regular appearances over the following three years. Other early punk appearances on the show included the Saints (July 1977), the Adverts (August 1977), Generation X (September 1977), the Boomtown Rats (September 1977), Elvis Costello (November 1977), Tom Robinson Band (November 1977), the Banned (December 1977) and the Vibrators (March 1978).

From late 1977, as punk and new wave made greater inroads into the charts, a number of UK groups made regular appearances on the show, including the Stranglers, Generation X, Buzzcocks, the Undertones, X Ray Spex, Siouxsie & the Banshees, the Skids, the Damned, Ian Dury & the Blockheads, the Members, UK Subs and XTC. Meanwhile, the Boomtown Rats, the Jam and the Police established hugely successful careers between 1977 and 1979, dominating the charts by the end of the decade and moving away – in the eyes of fans and music critics – from ‘punk’ and ‘new wave’ definitions altogether. In parallel to the UK punk boom, Blondie led the way for US new wave and what was to become known as ‘powerpop’, almost seamlessly crossing over from punk to pop. The visibility of punk and new wave music – in the charts, in magazines, on radio and television – also brought it into the realm of established industry practices.⁴

1 *Top of the Pops* was broadcast weekly between 1st January 1964 and 30th July 2006. The show occupied a prime slot on the schedule every Thursday evening, and presented live and mimed performances by artists with songs in the Top 30 of the official UK singles chart.

2 The Sex Pistols, ‘Pretty Vacant’, *Top Of The Pops* 14th July 1977. Interestingly, during the spring of 1979, two later singles by the (then defunct) group, ‘Something Else’ and ‘Silly Thing’, were played on the programme with an accompanying performance by the resident dance troupe, Legs & Co. Perhaps even more ironically, on 21st August 1980 Legs & Co also performed a routine to a new single by the Clash, ‘Bankrobber’.

3 Rotten went on to criticize mainstream music fans, as well as the industry, describing them as “...complacent, apathetic old farts who walk up and down, do nothing and moan about everything. Watch *Top of the Pops* and send their boring little letters in to Melody Maker, week after week...” (*Punk Rock*, 1976).

4 It also opened up opportunities for other commercial enterprises to get in on the action, from clothing manufacturers to marketing and branding specialists keen to stay one step ahead of the youth market.



Fig.01 *Top of the Pops* Volume 2, 1969, Hallmark Records. Design by Bill Graham.



Fig.02 *Top of the Pops* Volume 15, 1971, Hallmark Records. Design by Bill Graham.

One example was the low-budget *Top of the Pops* compilation album series, manufactured by Pickwick under the Hallmark Records label and featuring cover versions of chart hits of the day.⁵ While a few specialist punk compilation albums had enjoyed a measure of success during 1977, notably *New Wave* (Vertigo Records 1977), *Streets* (Beggars Banquet 1977) and the live albums *The Roxy*, *London WC2* (Harvest 1977) and *Live at the Vortex* (NEMS 1977), the wider market for the various artists format was associated with collections of popular hit records – either dug up from the archives or reflecting new and current trends in popular music. Albums of contemporary hits were usually marketed to young music fans as a cheaper alternative to buying a large number of chart singles and for playing at parties and social events. Some featured collections of original recordings, but these were limited in scope by licensing issues and copyright – a problem that also pushed up the cost of production and resulting retail price to the consumer. Pickwick's *Top of the Pops* series got around this problem by re-recording the songs with a group of anonymous session musicians, dubbed the Top of the Poppers, under the leadership of session musician Tony Rivers and producer Bruce Baxter.⁶

The Music For Pleasure label had pioneered this approach in the late 1960s, releasing collections of popular songs and show tunes including *Rock'n'Roll Party*, *Country & Western Favourites* and *The Greatest Music Hall Ever Assembled!*. Budget specialist labels Music For Pleasure, Pickwick and Pye targeted a mainstream market for recorded music through high street retailers such as Woolworths – large shops that stocked a range of popular records alongside household goods, clothing, books and sweets. Originally a US company based on the traditional 'general store' model, Woolworths had expanded to a global business during the early 20th century and by the 1950s boasted more than 1,000 stores in Britain, making it a highly visible presence on high streets across the country. The ubiquity and popularity of the brand was even embraced – ironically – by punk songwriters, for example in the classic X Ray Spex album track 'Warrior in Woolworths' (1978) and Chaotic Dischord's comedy hardcore punk song 'Anarchy in Woolworths' (1984). Roger Sabin

⁵ The Hallmark imprint had been launched by Pickwick in 1967, used for releases by artists such as Max Bygraves and Johnnie Ray.

⁶ Series producer Bruce Baxter took over at the start of 1971 and brought in his own team of vocalists including Tony Rivers, John Perry, Ken Gold, Stu Calver and Tina Charles (Top of the Pops – the definitive website, *The Pickwick Poppers* 2012).

recalls the Woolworths retail experience targeted a distinct demographic,

People who bought their records from here wouldn't necessarily be frequenting specialist record shops. Maybe if you were a youngster it's how you would have first experienced some of the punk bands, other than Top of the Pops itself. The records were so cheap that they would have been in pocket-money range. Maybe if you're a grannie, it's where you'd buy your birthday/Christmas presents for relatives. (Sabin 2019)

The target demographic for budget albums was the general listener rather than the specialist music fan, with a mass-marketing approach that pre-dated the television campaigns of the 1980s. These themes were drawn out in the marketing of the Music For Pleasure and Pickwick labels, with inner sleeves boasting huge sales figures (MFP sold more than 30,000,000 records in their first six years, according to album inner sleeve advertising in 1970) and a “*star-studded array of the world's greatest artistes.*” (Pickwick International inner sleeve advertising 1971).

In 1968, record producer Alan Crawford saw an opportunity to produce a series of albums documenting hits of the day, released regularly in ‘real time’ to reflect new releases and popular songs on the radio and in the charts. Pickwick took up Crawford’s proposal and launched the *Top of the Pops* series in mid-1968, with a second volume later in the year. The name was taken from the hugely successful BBC television pop programme – the title was not trademarked – though in practice there was no relationship between the two. From 1969, the *Top of the Pops* albums became more regular, with a new release every six to eight weeks. Quickly recorded and cheaply produced,⁷ the records were marketed as budget collections of the latest hits, though they seldom revealed the fact that the recordings were not by the original artists. Songwriting credits were included on the record labels, though just the song titles were listed on the record sleeves and the original artists were not named anywhere on the packaging. According to the *Top of the Pops* archive website, Baxter’s insistence on producing material to a tight deadline led to a high-pressure operation for all involved. The list of songs would be decided on a Friday, with Baxter tasked to work out arrangements and get the musical backing tracks recorded the following week. In the meantime the vocalists, led by Tony Rivers, would busy themselves preparing for their overdubs,

Rivers would be dispatched to Woolworths to purchase his own copies of each track, aware that the team would have at most a day to get their parts finished. Since time was tight, the singers rarely had proper published lyrics available, instructed instead to ‘make it up’ where uncertain. (Top of the Pops – the definitive website)

A short-lived spin-off series of albums was marketed as the *Top of the Pops European Edition* and featured a selection of songs from the regular UK releases together with a few European hits such as ‘Acropolis Adieu’ (originally recorded by Mireille Mathieu) and ‘Non, Non, Rien N’a Change’ (originally by Poppy), in part marketed to holidaymakers returning from package trips to Spain and the Mediterranean. There were even some specialized collections of songs composed by one artist – *The Top of the Poppers Sing and Play Simon & Garfunkel’s Greatest Hits* (1972), *The Top of the Poppers Sing and Play Gilbert O’Sullivan’s Greatest Hits* (1972), *The Top of the Poppers Sing and Play T-Rex’s Greatest Hits* (1973) and *The Top of the Poppers Sing and Play The Osmonds’ Greatest Hits* (1974), along with genre-themed collections such as *Disco Mania Vol.1* (1975) and *50 Red Hot Black Music Hits* (1977) and a series aimed at children, *Top of the Tots*.

⁷ The breakneck-speed recording sessions generally took place at De Lane Lea Studios on Kingsway, London, and sometimes at the CBS facility on Whitfield Street, off the Tottenham Court Road.



Fig.03 *Top of the Pops* Europe Edition Vol.1, 1971, Hallmark Records. Design by Bill Graham.



Fig.04 *Top of the Pops* Europe Edition Vol.2, 1971, Hallmark Records. Design by Bill Graham.

The records sold well, even reaching Number One in the UK album chart during 1971, though in 1972 the chart rules were revised and subsequent releases were disqualified, since their budget selling price was perceived as giving them an unfair advantage in the market. This spell of commercial success brought attention from other labels and a number of rivals were launched, though most were to be short-lived. By 1971, *Top of the Pops* was the market leader among a number of covers albums in the marketplace, including *Pick of the Pops* (Deacon Records, 1970-71), *World Top 12* (Flag Records, 1971-74), *12 Tops – Today's Top Hits* (Stereo Gold Award, 1972-75), *Today's Smash Hits* (Enterprise, 1971-73), *Pye Chartbusters* (Pye Records, 1971-75), *16 Chart Hits* (Contour, 1972-75), *Solid Gold Parade of Pops* (Windmill, 1972-76) and the most commercially successful competitor, *Hot Hits* (Music For Pleasure, 1970-73). All these albums reflected a similar concept and followed similar visual approaches in their use of cover models, though at times in more revealing costumes and explicit poses.⁸ Most of these competitors also indicated that the songs included were not original recordings, as the back cover of *Pye Chartbusters Volume 1* indicates, with a selection of current chart hits “...played and performed by artistes who really know how to re-create a hit sound and make it sound just as exciting as the original.” (*Pye Chartbusters Volume 1* sleeve notes)

Pickwick continued to release *Top of the Pops* collections around every two months throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s.⁹ The sleeve notes on the back cover of *Top of the Pops Vol.75* (August 1979) reflected on the origins and ensuing commercial success of the series;

IT IS OUR PLATINUM ANIVERSARY!

Pickwick's 75th volume of Top of the Pops

A true celebration to commemorate the 75th issue of this overwhelmingly successful series. 16 more smash hits on this special 75th edition. It all began as an experiment back in June 1968

⁸ The first volume of *Pye Chartbusters* (Pye Records 1971) featured a topless model, Nicola Austin, on the cover in a far more daring pose than the comparatively modest *Top of the Pops* album photographs.

⁹ The series ceased in 1982 with volume 91, though a one-off volume (92) was released in 1985. These 92 albums comprise a total of 1,190 individual recordings.



Fig.05 *Top of the Pops* Volume 37, 1974, Hallmark Records.



Fig.06 *Top of the Pops* Volume 53, 1976, Hallmark Records.

when Pickwick released 12 cover versions of current hits. It proved so successful that Pickwick went on to release 74 more volumes in the next 11 years. Even more staggering, in May, June and August of 1971, Top of the Pops made it to the No. 1 spot in the album charts!

We are also celebrating the fact that since 1968, the sales world-wide of Top of the Pops have exceeded 20 million. That's worth dancing to. At such great value, you cannot afford to miss 16 more smash hits.

To be in tip Top shape - Pop one in your collection!
(*Top of the Pops* Vol.75 sleeve notes)

In the late 1970s the main studio band behind the recordings was dispersed, and from around 1978 (Vol.70 onward) the label compiled material licenced from external producers. To further complicate matters, many of these cover versions were sourced from Coombe Music, who supplied the same recordings to rival label Chevron. Chevron then resurrected the earlier Windmill Records title *Solid Gold Parade of Pops*, abridged to *Parade of Pops*, for a short-lived series of budget compilations released between 1979 and 1981 that included many of the same recordings as the later *Top of the Pops* collections.

Cover Girls

From the outset, the *Top of the Pops* albums set out a strong visual identity. Pickwick's Managing Director Monty Lewis asked art director Bill Graham to come up with a sleeve design that would be eye-catching and recognisable from a distance. The artwork was to be based around a transparency photograph of a model that would be provided later. The designer had by this time already produced a range of cover designs for Pickwick, most of them budget albums featuring collections of older songs or cover recordings of popular stage musicals and films. Graham's small design team, who worked in a studio in the basement of the Pickwick International offices in Cricklewood, were used to working quickly to a brief,

We used to design three sleeves in the morning, order the type setting and artwork for

reproduction for those and then move on to laying up three designs from the previous day, since that artwork would now be ready for paste-up. It was like a sausage machine! (Graham 2019)

Graham had just a few hours to come up with a response, and created a simple, effective layout that combined bright colours with a bold, standardised typographic logo employing a distinctive black outline; *"I didn't know what kind of context the photograph would have, so I designed the titles to stand out from any background"* (Graham 2019). Song titles were listed underneath within a rounded rectangular box, and a colour palette chosen to reflect the model's clothing. Graham ordered the titles from a photo-typesetting company in Cooper Black, which he felt was 'right' for the concept and created the outline by hand by drawing directly onto the overlay. The typographic elements on the cover were created in such a way that they could be placed on either side, depending on the photograph provided. When he finally received the transparency, Graham realised that he could overlap the model with the text box a little, which he felt would tie the whole arrangement together, and he continued to employ this technique on subsequent covers through to leaving Pickwick in 1971. When the first volume sold well, Pickwick commissioned a *Top of the Pops* album series and Graham retained the visual convention, though models were photographed specifically for each edition. All the cover girls were *"dressed in summery clothes, nothing overly suggestive since the albums were for granny or mum to buy... not too sexy, we were aiming for a family audience"* (Graham 2019). Each cover featured a smiling female model looking directly at the viewer – a style of portraiture that harked back to the pin-ups of the 1950s, embracing a *"visual vocabulary of coyness, cheekiness [and] cheerfulness"* (Collins: 109). Following Graham's departure from Pickwick, the visual approach to *Top of the Pops* was retained, becoming a widely recognised brand identity and a leader in the field of budget pop compilation albums.

The graphic style reflected the covers of contemporary teen magazines (*Jackie, Fab* 208) and the branding of products aimed at young people, from fashion to entertainment. The widespread convention of female models in advertising and promotions – from cars to airlines, beer to peanuts, motorsport to business services – reflected both the stereotype of female beauty as defined by events such as the Miss World contest¹⁰ and, perhaps paradoxically, the 'sexual liberation' offered by the late 1960s counterculture (Mort 2010, Binns 2019).¹¹ The use of semi-naked women as decorative elements was also consistent with other mainstream popular cultural artefacts of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, from film (the *Carry On* comedy franchise (Thomas, 1958-92)) to television (*Whatever Happened To The Likely Lads* (1973-74), *The Liver Birds* (1969-79), *On The Buses* (1969-73), *The Benny Hill Show* (1955-91)) and publishing (particularly the *Daily Mirror*, *Sun*, *News of the World* and magazines such as *Club*, *Parade* and *Titbits*). Major brands aimed at a predominantly male audience also embraced the approach – in the late 1960s, for example, Scottish beer producer Wellpark Brewery chose to package its popular Tennent's Lager brand with full colour photographs of scantily dressed models on the back of the can. Dubbed the 'Lager Lovelies' the campaign proved highly popular and Wellpark continued the practice until the early 1990s (Schofield and Kamm 1984).

In a similar fashion, rock and pop music continued to exploit 'dolly birds' in mini-skirts and high heels as a standard trope in branding, marketing and performance. The historian Marcus Collins suggests that many of

¹⁰ The Miss World beauty pageant was launched by British television host Eric Morley in 1951 as part of the Festival of Britain. In 1959, the BBC started broadcasting the pageant, and its popularity grew. During the 1960s and 1970s, Miss World would be among the most watched programs on British television.

¹¹ Even *Cosmopolitan*, rebranded in 1965 under the editorship of Helen Gurley Brown as a magazine aimed at modern single career women, moved to a house style featuring models in revealing clothes on the front cover.

these suggestive and sexualised images had permeated popular culture in the 1950s through “...alibis – the pin-up, the artistic and the naturist – which acted as fronts behind which the erotic might hide, and whose maintenance proved to be a highly effective form of self-censorship” (Collins: 101). The 1960s, however, heralded an era of sexual liberation, and with it a step further away from the staid double standards of the previous decade, as Adrian Bingham notes,

The relaxation of the censorship regime in the 1960s enabled the much wider circulation of sexualised images in popular culture. [...] The preoccupation of most picture editors in the 1960s was to illustrate the changing mores of what they perceived to be an increasingly ‘permissive society’. They documented the shifts in clothing styles with endless shots of models posing in skimpy bikinis and brief mini-skirts... (Bingham: 219)

In the mainstream media, a careful balance was struck between moralising rhetoric and titillation, with some self-styled ‘modern’ newspapers embracing a more openly sexualised depiction of women in particular. It was within this context that the *Sun* newspaper, relaunched in November 1969 by Rupert Murdoch and Larry Lamb, began regularly featuring topless models,¹² in what was to become the ‘page three girl’ feature that was central to the paper’s brand identity of “*Britain’s brightest, most irreverent, most unpredictable paper.*”¹³ Within the field of popular music, albums by Latin Jazz favourites Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass, the Salsoul Orchestra collections of soul, funk and disco tunes and the Trojan Records *Tighten Up* series of budget reggae compilations all employed semi-naked women on their covers.¹⁴

Less than coincidentally, Beverley Pilkington, a British model and occasional *Sun* ‘page three’ girl who became the face (and body) of a campaign to promote Smiths Big D peanuts through dispenser displays in pubs where a glamorous image was revealed as packs of peanuts were removed, graced several *Top of the Pops* album covers,¹⁵ along with a number of other popular 1970s glamour models including Penny Irving,¹⁶ Susy Shaw, Jilly Johnson and Alison Begg. In light of the widely-seen images of these cover stars in the *Sun* newspaper and elsewhere, the photographs on the *Top of the Pops* album covers were remarkably tame by comparison and harked back to a more innocent age. Even the album sleeve notes evoked the language of the small number of popular DJs from Radio One who also regularly presented the *Top of the Pops* television show – Jimmy Savile, Tony Blackburn, Ed Stewart, Noel Edmunds – in all their inane glory, unchanged since the 1960s, as the back cover of *Top of the Pops Vol.66* (May 1978) ably demonstrates;

This album will knock you for 66! Yes, Pop-Pickers, this is volume 66 of the fantastic Top of the Pops from Pickwick! Once again we’ve taken 12 red-hot hits straight from the charts and put them together on a blockbuster of an album. Once again we bring you the sounds you want to

12 The second issue of the paper, on 18th November 1969, featured a centre spread that included two topless shots of Swedish model Uschi Obermeier. See Bingham: 221.

13 *The Sun*, 17th November 1970, p.2. Cited in Bingham: 222.

14 The cover of *Whipped Cream and Other Delights*, the fourth album by Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass (1965), featured model Dolores Erickson in chiffon and shaving cream, while the Salsoul Orchestra’s *Nice ‘N’ Naasty* (1976) included a full-length gatefold cover of a model in a short dress revealing her buttocks, with the two sides of the record labelled ‘left cheek’ and ‘right cheek’.

15 Pilkington appeared on the covers of *Top of the Pops* volumes 48, 53, 55 and 61, as well as two *TOTP* calendars.

16 Penny Irving is perhaps better remembered for her subsequent role as Mr Grace’s secretary Miss Bakewell in the popular BBC television comedy *Are You Being Served?*. Glamour model and future Bond girl Caroline Munroe graced the cover of *Top of the Pops European Edition Vol.2* in 1971.



Fig.07 *Top of the Pops* Volume 62 Spanish Edition, 1977, Olympo Records.



Fig.08 *Solid Gold Parade of Pops* 1979, Chevron Records.

hear so that you can make every night a party night. It's a sure-fire recipe for success and we've done it again! Swing along, sing along and get your kicks with Volume 66!
(*Top of the Pops* Vol.66 sleeve notes)

One particularly strong correlation between the *Top of the Pops* album covers and mainstream commercial pop marketing could be seen through the in-house dance troupe on the *Top of the Pops* television programme, Pan's People, who performed regularly on the show from mid-1968 through to April 1976.¹⁷ The programme's presenters would often make reference to the dancers in a suggestive manner, while surrounding themselves with young female pop fans in what was, following more recent revelations about some of those involved, a slightly more sinister scenario than may have been apparent to viewers at the time.

By the mid-1970s, the second wave feminist movement had encouraged something of a cultural shift, "...the irony was that the 'page three girl' was becoming entrenched just as the resurgent feminist movement was drawing public attention to the consequences of the objectification of women in popular culture" (Bingham: 223). The visual language of models pictured as a simple, passive prop to whatever product or brand the advertiser or designer was attempting to promote was becoming as tired and clichéd as the hackneyed dialogue of the *Top of the Pops* DJs. There is little question that punk played a role in its critique of gender roles and sexist stereotypes in rock and pop music, and the visual conventions of the *Top of the Pops* albums, together with the whole concept of budget-price, mainstream compilations of pop cover versions, seemed completely out of step with punk's (sub)cultural revolution.

Everybody's on Top of the Pops

It may come as a surprise, then, that the *Top of the Pops* series embraced some of the more popular punk and new wave songs of the period, some of which are strange bedfellows when placed alongside more upbeat, commercial 'pop' – punk and new wave hits sat next to disco, soul, rock'n'roll, novelty songs and easy listening.

¹⁷ Pan's People were succeeded by a mixed race and mixed gender dance troupe, Ruby Flipper, but that group was short-lived and a new all-female troupe, Legs & Co. took over in October 1976. All three groups were choreographed by Flick Colby, who had initially been a member of Pan's People.



Fig.09 *Top of the Pops* Volume 60, 1977, Hallmark Records.



Fig.10 *Top of the Pops* Volume 61, 1977, Hallmark Records.

Equally, the *Top of the Pops* album covers jar with a sense of punk identity, in part perhaps because of the clear overlap between feminist discourse and one strand of punk and post-punk subculture, but also because they seem a world away from the aggressive sexuality and confrontational, 'sex as a cultural weapon' angle promoted by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood through their King's Road boutique, SEX. Obviously there is something of a blurring of lines between what might be termed 'punk', new wave or mainstream popular music – all the songs that were included on the *Top of the Pops* albums between 1977 and 1981 were commercially successful, at least to a degree, and many also appeared in their original form on the *Top of the Pops* television programme (usually in awkwardly mimed performances over a hastily re-recorded backing track). However, a number were also clearly marketed – and received – as part of the punk movement and, despite their commercial success, remain closely associated with it.

The first punk song to appear on an album in the series was a version of the Sex Pistols' 'Pretty Vacant', which featured on *Top of the Pops Vol.60* in the summer of 1977. The group's third single, 'Pretty Vacant' was their first release to feature on the *Top of the Pops* television programme, on 14th July 1977, though they did not appear in the studio and a filmed performance of the song was shown instead. The song's inclusion indicated a level of public awareness of the group, together with a begrudging acceptance of the Sex Pistols and punk music more widely as part of the contemporary pop music landscape. The final track on side one, 'Pretty Vacant' followed the Brotherhood of Man's 'Angelo', while other hits featured on the album included versions of Donna Summer's disco hit 'I Feel Love' and Emerson, Lake and Palmer's prog rock opus 'Fanfare for the Common Man'. Session singer Tony Rivers provided lead vocals on 'Pretty Vacant', and later recalled the session in an interview with Stuart Maconie for BBC Radio Four. During the session at De Lane Lea studio, Wembley, Paul McCartney dropped in and asked whether they would mind if he brought in a friend to listen,

Anyway, McCartney walks back in and he's got Linda with him, which I can handle, that's no problem... and he's got the producer of the Sex Pistols record, Chris Thomas with him. So, they all stood there and listened to it from the top, to the end, and they said "that's great, I love it." I said "sorry about the vocal, to me it sounds like Norman Wisdom, so that's how I did it!"
(*The Pickwick Poppers* 2012)

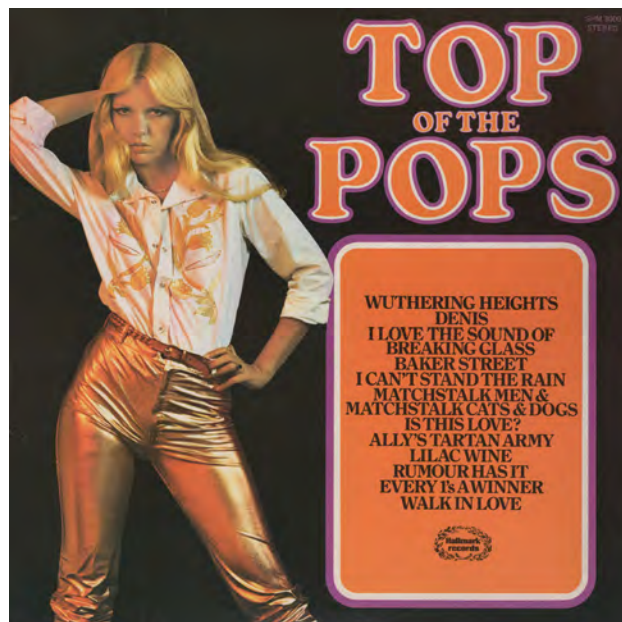
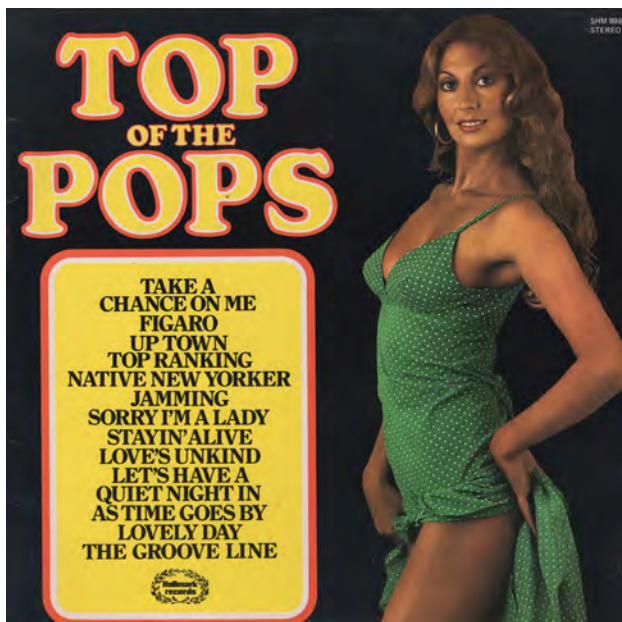


Fig.11 *Top of the Pops* Volume 62, 1977, Hallmark Records.

Fig.12 *Top of the Pops* Volume 63, 1977, Hallmark Records.

Fig.13 *Top of the Pops* Volume 64, 1977, Hallmark Records.

Fig.14 *Top of the Pops* Volume 65, 1978, Hallmark Records.

Fig.15 *Top of the Pops* Volume 66, 1978, Hallmark Records.

Fig.16 *Top of the Pops* Volume 67, 1978, Hallmark Records.

The album's rear cover sleeve notes indicate no sense of irony in the inclusion of a song by the leaders of the UK punk movement, despite the fact that they were banned from live performance in the UK at the time and widely condemned by the mainstream media,

All the latest top chart singles are tracked on this D-Y-N-A-M-I-C chart-busting L.P. Pickwick's Top Of The Poppers have got together all the amazing sounds that the D.J.'s just love to play on their shows. So, why not throw a party and let the Top Of The Poppers set the scene?!!
(*Top of the Pops* Vol.60 sleeve notes)

A few weeks later, *Top of the Pops* Vol.61 featured a cover of the classic new wave hit 'Do Anything You Wanna Do' by the Rods (a suitably abbreviated, punked-up name for established proto-punk group Eddie & the Hot Rods) alongside 'Gary Gilmore's Eyes' by the Adverts (sandwiched between versions of Space's electronic instrumental 'Magic Fly' and Donna Summer's 'Down Deep Inside'). The Adverts song – misspelt on the record cover as 'Gary Gilmour's Eyes' – was narrated from the point of view of a transplant patient who discovers that he has received the eyes of US double murderer Gary Gilmore, who had requested that his eyes be donated to science after his execution. Both the Rods and the Adverts made television appearances on *Top of the Pops* in August 1977, again linking their selection for the album series to wider public recognition. Despite being credited as songwriter on the record label (along with publisher Anchor Music/Adverse Noise), Adverts singer TV Smith was unaware of the cover version at the time of recording, "*I was only aware of the record after it was released. I assume all the necessary permissions were obtained through the label and publisher. They probably would have worried that the artists would have said no!*" (Smith 2019). He went on to elaborate on the error in the song's title and the quality of the session musicians' mimicry, though in retrospect his criticism is tempered by the profile afforded the song simply through its inclusion,

I thought it was a bit of a joke really – one to pull out at parties so everyone could have a laugh. Although "Gilmour" was a mis-spelling it faithfully followed the BMRB UK singles chart, who also mis-spelled it. There was a popular cricketer at the time called Gary Gilmour, and the powers that be obviously assumed that's who the song would be about.¹⁸ Whoever sung the TOTP version obviously didn't have a copy of the lyrics to hand when he recorded it, as you can hear quite a bit of bluffing along with the wrong words as he goes along... I seem to remember the last verse was particularly challenging for him. I remember being shocked at the whiny thin vocals – even more so when I realised they were supposed to be an imitation of me! I suppose in the end though, it was some sort of compliment to be included. (Smith 2019)

18 Gary Gilmore (4th December 1940 – 17th January 1977) was a US criminal who was the first person in almost ten years to be executed in the United States. Gary "Gus" Gilmore (26th June 1951 – 10th June 2014) was an Australian cricketer who played in fifteen Test Matches and five One Day Internationals between 1973 and 1977. An easy mistake.

In November 1977, *Top of the Pops Vol.62*¹⁹ saw the first inclusion of cover version of a song by the Stranglers – one of the most commercially successful of the new punk and new wave groups – ‘No More Heroes’.²⁰ The Stranglers had also mimed the song ‘live’ on *Top of the Pops* in September 1977, though not without some controversy as the group flamboyantly demonstrated to viewers that they weren’t actually playing their instruments (in a subsequent *Top of the Pops* performance, the band swapped instruments completely and made no attempt whatsoever to sync with the pre-recorded backing track). Meanwhile, Irish group the Boomtown Rats were a popular act on the *Top of the Pops* television programme, appearing many times between 1977 and 1982, as they made the transition from punk upstarts to mainstream pop group. They first appeared on 25th August 1977 to perform their debut single, ‘Looking After No.1’, with a repeat performance a month later, then returned in November 1977 with their second single, ‘Mary of the Fourth Form’. That song reached number 15 in the UK charts, and a cover version was included on *Top of the Pops Vol.63* – the first Boomtown Rats song to feature on the album series. They were one of the most prolific of the punk, new wave and post-punk groups to be included on the *Top of the Pops* series, with eight songs featured between 1977 and 1982. By comparison, Blondie appeared nine times in total between 1978-81, the Police six times between 1979-81 and the Jam five times between 1978-82. Indeed, it is clear that the inclusion of many of the more popular punk-related groups between 1977 and 1982 reflects the evolution of the genre during that period and the level of commercial acceptance afforded ‘new wave’ styles more generally. This culminated in a high-profile marketing and advertising rivalry between the Polydor and A&M record labels during 1980, with earlier singles by the Jam and the Police reissued to tie in with recent chart successes for both groups.²¹

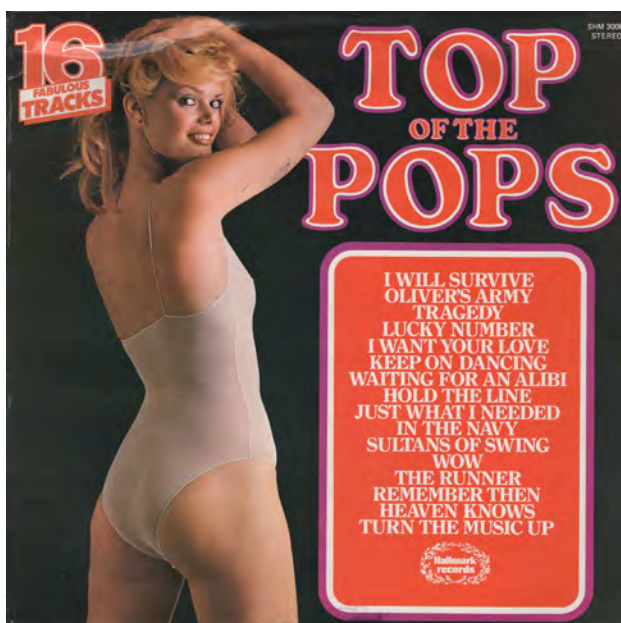
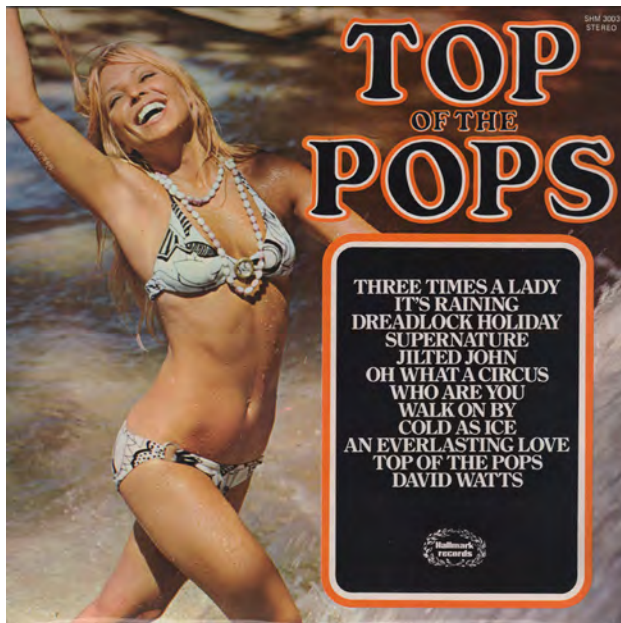
Blondie, the Boomtown Rats, the Pretenders and Adam & the Ants also achieved a high degree of commercial success during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and it could be argued that they moved significantly away from their punk roots to become key figures within mainstream popular music around the turn of the decade. The commercial inroads being made by ‘new wave’ acts are perhaps reflected in the selection for *Top of the Pops Vol.65* (March 1978): Blondie’s ‘Denis’ had reached number two in the UK singles chart, while Nick Lowe’s ‘I Love The Sound Of Breaking Glass’ peaked at number seven and ‘Because The Night’ by the Patti Smith Group achieved number five. This model continued for the next few albums in the series, with a number of high profile commercially successful new wave songs featured, though a few odd punk and new wave outliers found their way into the selection.

Top of the Pops Vol.68 (August 1978) included four punk-related tracks. The novelty song ‘Jilted John’ by Jilted John was a fairly obvious inclusion (for all its quirks), since it reached number four in the national chart, along with the fifth single release by the Jam, ‘David Watts’, which peaked at number 25. The Jam had appeared on the *Top of the Pops* television show several times since their debut performance in May 1977 and enjoyed a high profile with critics and the music press. Despite their comparatively poor showing in the charts to date, they were a fairly safe bet as an ‘up and coming’ new wave group. More unusually, the album included a cover of ‘Walk On By’ by the Stranglers – an epic, six minute-plus cover version of the 1964 Dionne Warwick rhythm and blues classic that reached number 21 in the chart, along with the Rezillos’ scathing attack on the music

19 This release is perhaps more notable retrospectively for its inclusion of versions of David Bowie’s ‘Heroes’ and Queen’s ‘We Are the Champions’.

20 A slightly revised version of the album, including ‘No More Heroes’, was released by the Spanish Olympos label in 1978 with the title *Lo Mejor de Lo Mejor* (“The Best of The Best”).

21 The Jam reached the number one spot with ‘Going Underground’ (March 1980), ‘Start!’ (August 1980) and ‘Town Called Malice’ (February 1982), while the Police topped the charts with ‘Message In A Bottle’ (September 1979), ‘Walking On The Moon’ (November 1979), ‘Don’t Stand So Close To Me’ (September 1980) and ‘Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic’ (November 1981).



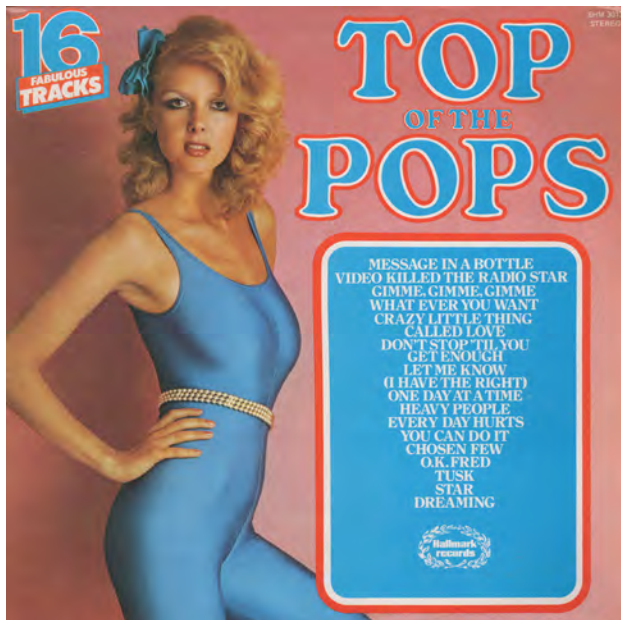
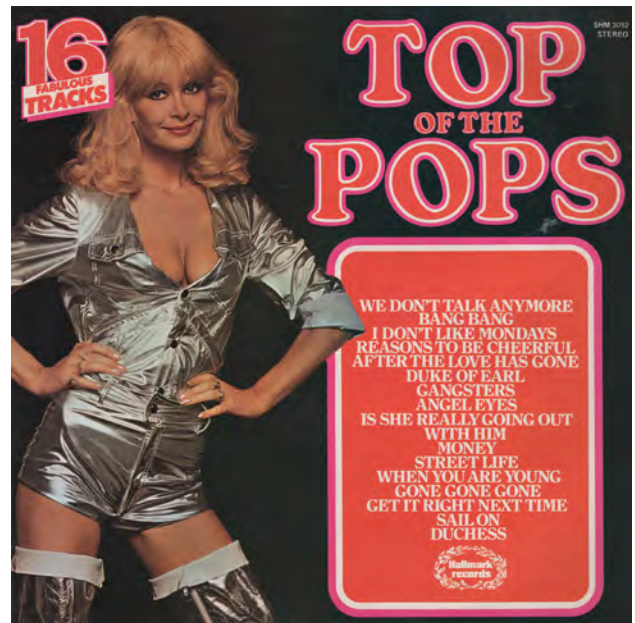


Fig.17 *Top of the Pops* Volume 68, 1978, Hallmark Records.

Fig.18 *Top of the Pops* Volume 69, 1978, Hallmark Records.

Fig.19 *Top of the Pops* Volume 70, 1978, Hallmark Records.

Fig.20 *Top of the Pops* Volume 71, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.21 *Top of the Pops* Volume 72, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.22 *Top of the Pops* Volume 73, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.23 *Top of the Pops* Volume 74, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.24 *Top of the Pops* Volume 75, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.25 *Top of the Pops* Volume 76, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.26 *Top of the Pops* Volume 77, 1979, Hallmark Records.

Fig.27 *Top of the Pops* Volume 78, 1980, Hallmark Records.

Fig.28 *Top of the Pops* Volume 79, 1980, Hallmark Records.

industry – and specifically the *Top of the Pops* television show – ‘Top Of The Pops’. In a wonderfully ironic example of the lack of awareness of television producers and record industry executives, the Rezillos were invited to perform the song to a pre-recorded backing track on *Top of the Pops* (31st August 1978), the lyrics of the song made even more caustic through their context on the programme itself,

*Doesn't matter what is shown
Just as long as everyone knows
What is selling, what to buy
The stock market for your hi-fi*

*Take the money
Leave the box
Everybody's on Top of the Pops
(The Rezillos, 'Top of the Pops')*

The inclusion of the song on the *Top of the Pops* album series only heightens this irony further. The single reached number 17 in the UK charts and the Rezillos failed to capitalise on its success, but it does present something of a conundrum to the punk listener. While some successful groups were embracing their commercial success, and to an extent ‘selling out’ their earlier, punk-inspired positions, others were falling into public view with much less of a plan in place. A similar case might be made for the Doll, whose one stab at a commercial single, ‘Desire Me’, reached number 28 in the UK charts in February 1979 and was included on *Top of the Pops Vol.71* or the Skids, whose sixth single ‘Working For The Yankee Dollar’ was included on *Top of the Pops Vol.77* in December 1979. Both groups made television appearances on *Top of the Pops* (in fact the Skids appeared regularly on the show, twelve times in total between 1979 and 1981) but neither managed the commercial breakthrough of their more successful peers.

The inclusion of the Dickies’ cover of US children’s television theme tune ‘Banana Splits’ (*Top of the Pops Vol.73*, May 1979) is less surprising – like ‘Jilted John’ the song has obvious novelty and crossover appeal, as does Lene Lovich’s quirky ‘Lucky Number’ (*Top of the Pops Vol.72*, March 1979) and the Regents’ ‘7Teen’ (*Top of the Pops Vol.78*, February 1980). The *Top of the Pops* album producers appeared to be still very much in tune with the public at this time, since most punk/new wave-related tracks featured on the albums scored top twenty, if not top ten chart places. However, a couple of other examples stand out for their



Fig.29 *The Best of Top of the Pops '80*, 1980, Hallmark Records.



Fig.30 *Top of the Pops Volume 84*, 1981, Hallmark Records.

idiosyncrasy. *Top of the Pops Vol.74* (July 1979) not only featured the post-Johnny Rotten Sex Pistols single 'C'Mon Everybody', a cover of the Eddie Cochran classic sung by Sid Vicious on the soundtrack to the film *The Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle*, alongside Tubeway Army, Squeeze, Shirley Bassey and Diana Ross, it also included the Public Image Ltd. single 'Death Disco'. Sandwiched between disco hits 'Born To Be Alive' by Patrick Hernandez and 'Light My Fire' by Amii Stewart, John Lydon's anguished paean to his dying mother makes for uncomfortable listening. The fact that these are cover versions, recorded by session musicians, only adds to the sense of incongruity.

Top of the Pops Vol.84 (January 1981) also throws up some curveballs. Adam & the Ants, a group who had been at the forefront of the early UK punk scene before going on to establish a cult following as post-punk icons, had reinvented themselves as new romantic pop stars with their hit singles 'Dog Eat Dog' and 'Antmusic' in the Autumn of 1980, and the group's 1978 debut single 'Young Parisians' was reissued along with second and third singles 'Zerox' and 'Car Trouble' to cash in on their success. 'Young Parisians' did reach number nine in the UK charts, but the song was very much out of step with either the new direction that the group were moving in, as well as the prevailing mood of the charts.²² Alongside 'Young Parisians' and songs by the Boomtown Rats, Dire Straits, Cliff Richard and XTC on the same album, Honey Bane's third solo single 'Turn Me On, Turn Me Off' clashes together contemporary pop with punk even more starkly, perhaps, than Adam Ant. Honey Bane (Donna Tracy Boylan) had begun her musical career as vocalist in the teenage post-punk band Fatal Microbes, before going on to work with anarcho-punk collective Crass and releasing one of the first records on the Crass Records label, *You Can Be You*, in the Autumn of 1979. She then teamed up with Sham 69 singer Jimmy Pursey and signed to Zonophone, an imprint of EMI Records, for a series of singles aimed deliberately at the commercial market. The first of these, 'Turn Me On, Turn Me Off', reached number 37 in the UK charts, while a subsequent cover of the Supremes' 'Baby Love' foreshadowed the end of the singer's commercial prospects.

²² The following two singles by Adam & the Ants, 'Stand And Deliver' (June 1981) and 'Prince Charming' (September 1981) both reached number one in the UK singles chart, and both were covered on *Top of the Pops* albums (Vol.86 and Vol.88 respectively).

The End of an Era

Sales of the *Top of the Pops* album series plummeted in the early 1980s, and the albums were consigned to dusty attics, bargain bins in charity shops and car boot sales. Perhaps public opinion had finally caught up with the condemnation of the mainstream music industry that stemmed from punk's critical catalyst. The passing of a decade and the progressive push reflecting a perceived new era may also have played a part, though slowly shifting tastes in popular music inevitably led to the feeling that old models of marketing and promotion had become exhausted. The gulf between 'pop' and more serious 'rock' music had been widening since the 1960s: notions of originality and authenticity gradually undermined some of the traditional 'light entertainment' conventions of an earlier era, including session musicians performing popular songs aimed at a passive audience with no particular allegiance to the original composer (Barker & Taylor 2007). The notion of the cover version also changed over time, shifting toward more personalised, sometimes radical, interpretations of a song by contemporary artists.

In October 1983, Virgin Records and EMI jointly launched *Now That's What I Call Music* – double vinyl budget compilation albums of the latest chart hits, featuring the original artist recordings rather than cover versions. CBS followed a year later with *The Hits Album*, a similar concept backed by a major television advertisement campaign. The marketing of collections of contemporary pop hits, across a variety of genres and styles, mirrored the earlier budget compilations in many ways, but with the added attraction of featuring recordings by the 'real' pop stars themselves.²³ It is impossible to say whether punk was a motivator in this transition, or was simply swept along by wider cultural changes, but by the turn of the decade the *Top of the Pops* house style appeared suddenly rather dated and anachronistic. Coincidentally, Jamie Reid, graphic designer for the Sex Pistols, had even parodied the stereotype with his cover design for the posthumous collection *Flogging A Dead Horse* in 1979. Reid's initial proposal, which involved presenting the label, Virgin Records, the covers of the previous two Sex Pistols albums with the new title scrawled on top was rejected, so the designer decided to parody the generic visual language of the budget compilation,

"...Trevor Key and I found the most tacky photo we could find of a model from a tacky agency. We just used the most boring sort of rope Letraset ... Like the swastika sleeves and the Who/Monkees sleeve, it was a final fuck off to Virgin" (Reid & Savage: 104).

By the early 2000s the *Top of the Pops* albums had regained a little cultural capital – partly for their kitsch value, though a critical reevaluation of some of the cover versions on the albums (notably those mimicking high profile artists such as David Bowie and Queen) led to something of a collector's market for particular volumes. BBC Radio Four produced a short documentary entitled *The Pickwick Poppers* in 2012, presented by Stuart Maconie and featuring interviews with some of the session musicians involved behind the scenes, and a book by Tim Joseph, *When Cover Girls Ruled The World*, was planned by Easy On The Eye books in 2018, but unfortunately publication has been postponed (*Top of the Pops – The Definitive Website*, n.d.). In November 2018, *Electronic Sound* magazine released a vinyl compilation, *The Top of the Poppers Sing and Play the Hits of David Bowie*, paying tribute to the *Top of the Pops* cover versions of Bowie's biggest hits.

However, the *Top of the Pops* albums that were released between mid-1977 and early 1982 do tell an interesting story about the commodification of punk, new wave and post-punk, and ask questions, perhaps, about the legitimacy of punk's 'outsider status' in the first place. Commercial success and radical posturing

²³ Punk and new wave was, in mainstream terms at least, largely dead and buried as a commercial force by this time, and the few groups with a related background that did feature on the *Now That's What I Call Music* and *Hits* album series (the Stranglers, Adam Ant, the Cure, Ultravox) had moved far closer to the mainstream.



Fig.31 *Top of the Pops* Volume 84, 1981, Hallmark Records.



Fig.32 Sex Pistols, *Flogging A Dead Horse*, 1979, Virgin Records. Design by Jamie Reid.

are odd bedfellows, though the marketing appeal of rock'n'roll outlaws dates back to at least the 1950s, and the absorption of punk and new wave styles into the mainstream was simply a continuation of that process. Equally, commercial success breeds a level of acceptance and public tastes evolve to include styles and conventions that may have appeared alien in earlier times. The examples of punk and new wave-related songs featured on the *Top of the Pops* album series reflect both the changing landscape of popular music in general, and punk's journey from underground subculture into the mainstream. Even as this evolution was in progress, a punk and post-punk backlash was building beneath the commercial radar, and what was seen as a recuperation of punk's original ideal provided a spur to action for many others to take things in newer and more radical directions. However, that doesn't negate the importance of the earlier punk and new wave pioneers who made the original journey into the commercial limelight, even if they did so inadvertently.

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Sex Pistols – 'Pretty Vacant' (Vol.60, July 1977). Highest chart position: 6.

The Rods – 'Do Anything You Wanna Do' (Vol.61, August 1977). Highest chart position: 9.

The Adverts – ‘Gary Gilmore’s Eyes’ (Vol.61, August 1977). Highest chart position: 18.

The Stranglers – ‘No More Heroes’ (Vol.62, October 1977). Highest chart position: 8.

Boomtown Rats – ‘Mary of the Fourth Form’ (Vol.63, December 1977). Highest chart position: 15.

Blondie – ‘Denis’ (Vol.65, March 1978). Highest chart position: 2

Nick Lowe – ‘I Love The Sound Of Breaking Glass’ (Vol.65, March 1978). Highest chart position: 7.

Patti Smith Group – ‘Because The Night’ (Vol.66, May 1978). Highest chart position: 5.

Blondie – ‘(I’m Always Touched By Your) Presence Dear’ (Vol.66, May 1978). Highest chart position: 10.

Boomtown Rats – ‘She’s So Modern’ (Vol.66, May 1978). Highest chart position: 12.

The Motors – ‘Airport’ (Vol.67, July 1978). Highest chart position: 4.

Boomtown Rats – ‘Like Clockwork’ (Vol.67, July 1978). Highest chart position: 6.

The Jam – ‘David Watts’ (Vol.68, August 1978). Highest chart position: 25.

The Rezillos – ‘Top Of The Pops’ (Vol.68, August 1978). Highest chart position: 17.

The Stranglers – ‘Walk On By’ (Vol.68, August 1978). Highest chart position: 21.

Jilted John – ‘Jilted John’ (Vol.68, August 1978). Highest chart position: 4.

Boomtown Rats – ‘Rat Trap’ (Vol.69, October 1978). Highest chart position: 1.

Blondie – ‘Hanging On The Telephone’ (Vol.70, December 1978). Highest chart position: 5.

The Cars – ‘My Best Friend’s Girl’ (Vol.70, December 1978). Highest chart position: 3.

Ian Dury & the Blockheads – ‘Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick’ (Vol.71, February 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

The Doll – ‘Desire Me’ (Vol.71, February 1979). Highest chart position: 28.

Lene Lovich – ‘Lucky Number’ (Vol.72, March 1979). Highest chart position: 3.

The Cars – ‘Just What I Needed’ (Vol.72, March 1979). Highest chart position: 17.

Elvis Costello – ‘Oliver’s Army’ (Vol.72, March 1979). Highest chart position: 2.

The Police – ‘Roxanne’ (Vol.73, May 1979). Highest chart position: 12.

Blondie – ‘Sunday Girl’ (Vol.73, May 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

The Dickies – ‘Banana Splits’ (Vol.73, May 1979). Highest chart position: 7.

Tubeway Army – ‘Are Friends Electric’ (Vol.74, July 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

Sex Pistols – ‘C’Mon Everybody’ (Vol.74, July 1979). Highest chart position: 3.

Squeeze – ‘Up The Junction’ (Vol.74, July 1979). Highest chart position: 2.

Public Image Ltd. – ‘Death Disco’ (Vol.74, July 1979). Highest chart position: 20.

Flying Lizards – ‘Money’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 5.

The Specials – ‘Gangsters’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 6.

Ian Dury & the Blockheads – ‘Reasons To Be Cheerful’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 3.

Boomtown Rats – ‘I Don’t Like Mondays’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

Joe Jackson – ‘Is She Really Going Out With Him’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 13.

The Stranglers – ‘Duchess’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 14.

The Jam – ‘When You’re Young’ (Vol.75, August 1979). Highest chart position: 17.

The Police – ‘Message In A Bottle’ (Vol.76, October 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

Blondie – ‘Dreaming’ (Vol.76, October 1979). Highest chart position: 2.

Boomtown Rats – ‘Diamond Smiles’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 13.

Gary Numan – ‘Complex’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 6.

The Police – ‘Walking On The Moon’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 1.

Blondie – ‘Union City Blue’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 13.

The Skids – ‘Working For The Yankee Dollar’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 20.

The Jam – ‘Eton Rifles’ (Vol.77, December 1979). Highest chart position: 3.

Joe Jackson – ‘It’s Different For Girls’ (Vol.78, February 1980). Highest chart position: 5.

The Pretenders – ‘Brass In Pocket’ (Vol.78, February 1980). Highest chart position: 1.

The Regents – ‘7Teen’ (Vol.78, February 1980). Highest chart position: 11.

Boomtown Rats – ‘Someone’s Looking At You’ (Vol.78, February 1980). Highest chart position: 4.

The Jam – ‘Going Underground’ (Vol.79, April 1980). Highest chart position: 1.

The Pretenders – ‘Talk Of The Town’ (Vol.79, April 1980). Highest chart position: 8.

Gary Numan – ‘We Are Glass’ (Vol.80, June 1980). Highest chart position: 5.

The Undertones – ‘Wednesday Week’ (Vol.81, August 1980). Highest chart position: 11.

The Police – ‘Don’t Stand So Close To Me’ (Vol.82, September 1980). Highest chart position: 1.

Blondie – ‘The Tide Is High’ (Vol.83, November 1980). Highest chart position: 1.

Blondie – ‘Rapture’ (Vol.84, January 1981). Highest chart position: 5.

Adam & the Ants – ‘Young Parisians’ (Vol.84, January 1981). Highest chart position: 9.

Boomtown Rats – ‘The Elephant’s Graveyard (Guilty)’ (Vol.84, January 1981). Highest chart position: 26.

Honey Bane – ‘Turn Me On, Turn Me Off’ (Vol.84, January 1981). Highest chart position: 37.

XTC – ‘Sgt. Rock (Is Going To Help Me)’ (Vol.84, January 1981). Highest chart position: 16.

The Undertones – ‘It’s Going To Happen’ (Vol.86, June 1981). Highest chart position: 18.

Adam & The Ants – ‘Stand And Deliver’ (Vol.86, June 1981). Highest chart position: 1.

Adam & The Ants – ‘Prince Charming’ (Vol.88, September 1981). Highest chart position: 1.

The Police – ‘Invisible Sun’ (Vol.88, September 1981). Highest chart position: 2.

The Police – ‘Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic’ (Vol.89, November 1981). Highest chart position: 1.

Altered Images – ‘Happy Birthday’ (Vol.89, November 1981). Highest chart position: 2.

Squeeze – ‘Labelled With Love’ (Vol.89, November 1981). Highest chart position: 4.

XTC – ‘Senses Working Overtime’ (Vol.90, February 1982). Highest chart position: 10.

The Jam – ‘Town Called Malice’ (Vol.90, February 1982). Highest chart position: 1.